

SHIPS

Duxbury flush with Rose success

Tall ship's visit raises \$51,800 for school

By Joseph Marois
MPG Newspapers

DUXBURY — The sound of cannon fire echoed off Standish Shore Friday as the tall ship *HMS Rose* sailed safely into Snug Harbor to the cheers of hundreds of Duxbury residents.

The ship's weekend stay turned the clock back to the days when Duxbury reigned as a shipbuilding mecca, a period that ironically ended in the late 19th century because Duxbury Harbor was not deep enough to build ships as big as the *Rose*.

"Thank God for multimillion dollar dredging projects," Duxbury harbormaster Donald Beers said, wiping his brow as he guided the *Rose* through waters as shallow as 19 feet.

The ship was the centerpiece of a fundraising weekend which raised more than \$51,800 for the Duxbury Bay Maritime School, according to school founder Sherman Hoyt. Hoyt said thousands of people shelled out the \$5 per person or \$10 per family fee to tour the 550-ton square-rigged ship as she sat docked at the harbor on an incredibly beautiful Saturday and a not-so-bad Sunday afternoon.

"We estimate that around 8,000 people came down," said Tony Chamberlain, a member of the school's board of directors. "That might be a little low," he said of the figure.

"Sponsors helped us out greatly," said Chamberlain in making the *Rose's* presence possible.

As Beers set out to meet the ship and lead her into port last Friday, he explained the work that

had been done to clear a channel for the ship to fit through. Many boats and moorings had to be moved, he said, adding that local boatowners were cooperative. Passengers on board the town's harbormaster boat crowded toward the bow Friday afternoon to catch the first glimpse of the *Rose* as she sat off Gurnet Point. Helicopters buzzed overhead, and sightseers aboard a variety of vessels whizzed around the *Rose* in an effort to get a snapshot or just to gawk at her yellow hull.

A familiar face appeared on the foredeck of the *Rose*, Duxbury town manager Rocco Longo.

"She's a beauty," said Beers as he guided the 32-foot-wide ship down the narrow passage into the harbor. Many smaller vessels, even kayaks and canoes, were out on Snug Harbor to escort the ship in as well. Beers had to give an occasional yell to clear people and their little boats out of the way. The three Duxbury Harbor Patrol boats were assisted by two of Plymouth's boats and the *Ranger* from Massachusetts Maritime Academy, which led the way ahead of Beers' patrol boat. A group from the Saquish Rowing Club sculled alongside the *Rose* at a steady clip.

Crew members aboard the *Rose* could be seen climbing the ship's rigging and crawling across her masts, securing sails and other tasks as the ship's twin 671s paced her behind Beers' boat. The ride in was slow and cautious, at one point the *Rose* had to navigate a tricky turn near the Bug Light.

"This is a gruesome corner here because there's a sandbar that sticks out," said assistant harbormaster Neil Chandler.

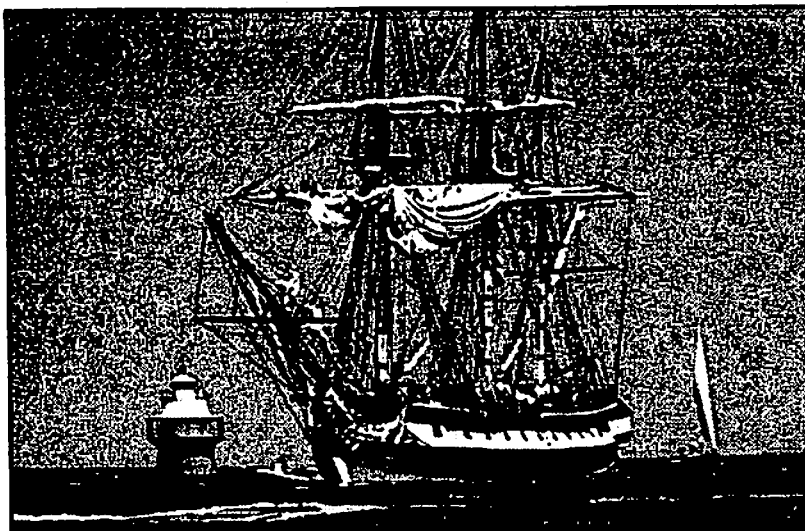
As the harbor patrol boats stood by ready to give a push if necessary, the wooden ship made the turn under her own power.

"I feel my fingers twitching

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Staff photo/Sean Walsh

By the Bug — The tall ship *HMS Rose* passes the Bug Light Friday on its way into Duxbury Harbor.

towards the horn," said Richard Bailey on the VHF radio, to the laughter of all those tuned in to his channel and followed by a spirited blast echoed by every boat on the harbor with a horn.

"I don't have anything to do on the *Rose* so I think I'm going to have to fire this little gun," Bailey added moments later, setting off the first of several celebratory cannon blasts.

"This will be your last liability," said Beers as the ship followed him through the final pair of bouys into the harbor.

"Ah, my underwriters rejoice!" answered Bailey.

Soon the ship glided alongside the float in front of the harbor master's shed as the high school band played on the roof of the new maritime school and the color guard's flags were unfurled.

"She just floated in," said Beers whose nervousness earlier in the day had turned to relief and jubilation. The gangplank was slowly lowered and affixed to the float as onlookers burst into applause.

"It was unbelievable — an excellent day," said Longo of his ride aboard the historic ship.

"It was not as bad as I thought it would be," said Bailey as he disembarked with his Jack Russell terrier. "All that good navigation really helped us out."

The 179-foot ship, a replica of a British warship, inspired "oohs" and "aahs" from the assembled throng.

"It was an absolutely perfect weekend," said Beers, adding that the *Rose* sailed out of Snug Harbor at 4:30 a.m. Monday morning on the tide. The ship's home port is in Bridgeport, Conn.

Fundraising activities during the weekend included christening the maritime school's sailboats and a silent auction. The grand prize of the auction was a week long cruise aboard the *Rose*. The highest bid for that prize was turned in by West Street residents Thomas and Roberta Nutter.

"If we hadn't raised a penny it was still an incredible success," said Mike Horn, maritime school director.